

**Amendments to the Claims:**

Please cancel claims 73-75, please amend claims 2, 4-8, 10-12, 14-17, 19-22, 24-26 and 76-83, and please add new claim 84 as follows:

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Currently Amended) The vessel of claim ~~74~~ wherein the background material includes a paint layer, further wherein the first surface of the background material is defined by a first surface of the paint layer and the second surface of the background material is defined by the second surface of the paint layer.
3. (Cancelled)
4. (Currently Amended) ~~The vessel of claim 74~~ A vessel for observing a chemical substance, comprising:  
a base portion having an outer surface and an inner surface;  
an optically transmissive wall portion projecting away from the base portion and having an inner surface, an outer surface, a first region, and a second region opposite the first region, the outer surfaces of the base portion and the wall portion defining an exterior region, the inner surfaces of the base portion and the wall portion defining an interior region, the interior region being configured to contain the chemical substance and having an opening configured to removably receive the chemical substance; and  
a background material having a first surface facing toward the interior region and a second surface facing away from the first surface, the background material being positioned between the inner and outer surfaces of the base portion and the wall portion, the background material being configured so that at least approximately the entire first surface of the background material in the base portion and in the first region of the wall portion is visible through the second region of the wall portion from the exterior region;

wherein the base portion, and the wall portion ~~and the interface region~~ are integrally formed with each other.

5. (Currently Amended) The vessel of claim 744, further comprising a protective layer adjacent to the second surface of the background material.

6. (Currently Amended) The vessel of claim 744 wherein the background material has a single hue.

7. (Currently Amended) The vessel of claim 744 wherein the background material is opaque.

8. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) The vessel of claim 4-4 wherein a first portion of the background material has a first hue and a second portion of the background material has a second hue different than the first hue.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended) The vessel of claim 744 wherein at least a portion of the background material is white.

11. (Currently Amended) The vessel of claim 744 wherein at least a portion of the background material is black.

12. (Currently Amended) The vessel of claim 744 wherein the background material covers at least approximately the entire base portion.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) The vessel of claim ~~1-4~~4 wherein the background material includes a flexible sheet adhesively bonded to the base portion and/or the wall portion.

15. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) The vessel of claim ~~1-4~~4 wherein the background material includes an elongated strip.

16. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) The vessel of claim ~~1-4~~4 wherein a perimeter of the background material on the wall portion has an elliptical shape.

17. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) The vessel of claim ~~14~~4 wherein the base portion has a generally circular shape and the wall portion has a generally conical lower portion and a generally cylindrical upper portion.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Currently Amended) The vessel of claim ~~73-84~~84 wherein the background material has a single hue.

20. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) The vessel of claim ~~48-84~~84 wherein a first portion of the background material has a first hue and a second portion of the background material has a second hue different than the first hue.

21. (Currently Amended) The vessel of claim ~~73-84~~84 wherein at least a portion of the background material is white.

22. (Currently Amended) The vessel of claim ~~73-84~~84 wherein the background material covers at least approximately the entire base portion.

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) The vessel of claim ~~48~~84 wherein the background material includes a flexible sheet adhesively bonded to the base portion and/or the wall portion.

25. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) The vessel of claim ~~48~~84 wherein the background material includes an elongated strip.

26. (Currently Amended) The vessel of claim ~~73~~84 wherein the base portion has a generally circular shape and the wall portion has a generally conical lower part adjacent to the base portion and a generally cylindrical upper part adjacent to the lower part.

27-75. (Cancelled)

76. (Currently Amended) The vessel of claim ~~75~~77 wherein the background material includes a paint layer, and wherein the first surface of the background material is defined by a first surface of the paint layer and the second surface of the background material is defined by the second surface of the paint layer.

77. (Currently Amended) ~~The vessel of claim 75~~ A vessel for observing a chemical substance, comprising:

a base portion having an outer surface and an inner surface;

an optically transmissive wall portion projecting away from the base portion and

having an inner surface, an outer surface, a first region, and a second

region opposite the first region, the outer surfaces of the base portion and

the wall portion defining an exterior region, the inner surfaces of the base

portion and the wall portion defining an interior region, the interior region

being configured to contain the chemical substance and having an

opening configured to removably receive the chemical substance; and

a background material having a first surface facing toward the interior region and

a second surface facing away from the first surface, the background

material being positioned between the inner and outer surfaces of the base portion and the wall portion, the background material being positioned in the first region at a first distance spaced apart from the base portion and being absent from the second region at a second distance spaced apart from the base portion, the second distance being at least approximately equal to the first distance;

wherein the base portion, and the wall portion, ~~and the interface region~~ are integrally formed with each other.

78. (Currently Amended) The vessel of claim ~~75~~77, further comprising a protective layer adjacent to the second surface of the background material.

79. (Currently Amended) The vessel of claim ~~75-77~~ wherein the background material has a single hue.

80. (Currently Amended) The vessel of claim ~~75-77~~ wherein the background material is opaque.

81. (Currently Amended) The vessel of claim ~~75-77~~ wherein at least a portion of the background material is white.

82. (Currently Amended) The vessel of claim ~~75-77~~ wherein at least a portion of the background material is black.

83. (Currently Amended) The vessel of claim ~~75-77~~ wherein the background material covers at least approximately the entire base portion.

84. (New) A vessel for observing a chemical substance, comprising:  
a base portion having an outer surface and an inner surface;  
an optically transmissive wall portion projecting away from the base portion and having an inner surface, an outer surface, a first region, and a second

region opposite the first region, the outer surfaces of the base portion and the wall portion defining an exterior region, the inner surfaces of the base portion and the wall portion defining an interior region, the interior region being configured to contain the chemical substance and having an opening configured to removably receive the chemical substance; and

a background material having a first surface facing toward the interior region and a second surface facing away from the first surface, the background material being positioned between the inner and outer surfaces of the base portion and the wall portion, the background material being configured so that the entire first surface of the background material in the base portion and in the first region of the wall portion is visible through the second region of the wall portion from the exterior region, wherein the second region of the wall portion is optically transmissive and does not contain a portion of the background material between the opening and the base portion;

wherein the base portion and the wall portion are integrally formed with each other.